



STATE OF CONNECTICUT • COUNTY OF TOLLAND  
INCORPORATED 1786

# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

## BOARD OF FINANCE

### BUDGET HEARING BOARD OF EDUCATION

TOWN HALL  
TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2006

ROBERT K. PAGANI  
Chairman

RICHARD J. CLEARY  
ROBERT J. CLEMENTS  
MARK A. JOYSE  
BARRY C. PINTO  
ALBERT S. WACHSMAN

**Members Present:** Robert Pagani-Chairman, Richard Cleary, Mark Joyse, Barry Pinto, Albert Wachsman

**Members Absent:** Robert Clements

**Others Present:** G. Daigle-Budget Advisory, R. Packman-Supt of Schools, D. Roberson-BOE Chmn, A. Littizzio-BOE Bus Svs, Board of Education members, school officials and principals, residents, Reminder reporter.

Chairman Robert Pagani opened the hearing at 7:35 pm.

In his opening statement Mr. Pagani recapped the four referenda that occurred last year and the cost for holding them. He commended the school supporters for supporting the Board of Education budget and stated that it is up to the taxpayers whether the budget passes, not the Board of Finance members. The supporters' time would be better spent on getting support from their neighbors to vote yes.

Spokesman for the group, Walter Willette, stated that their group is concerned with class sizes. This year they will support the Board of Finance's effort and thanked the Board for their work. Beth Tautkus, Brookfield Drive, told the Board that they would be working together to get the parents out to vote for the budget.

### Board of Education

Dale Roberson, Chairman, BOE opened the presentation. He stated that in June 2005, 149 seniors graduated. The budget adopted by the Board of Education for 2006/07 is \$26,518,265 which is an increase of \$2,629,610 or 11%. The areas addressed in this proposed budget are growth and class sizes, contracted salaries and benefits, new staffing, increased energy costs and state and federal mandates.

Maurice Blanchette presented the 2005/06 budget information for the remainder of the year. He stated that staffing increases planned for 05/06 were not done, some teachers were laid off, classroom aides were reduced, a pay for play program was instituted, students were charged for parking, all improvement plans were deferred, and the budget was refined.

The second quarter realized a budget deficit for the remainder of the year of \$200,000 due mainly to increased energy costs. The Superintendent has frozen all new purchases. This budget will balance if the additional appropriation of \$200,000 passes through the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and the Town Meeting process. The Town of Ellington is currently 146 in current expenditures per pupil.

Dr. Packman presented student performance data. Ellington did better than the ERG and State in the CMT for 2004, and the CAPT and SAT scores for Ellington students were very competitive. Present staffing levels are in a danger zone, and the greatest concern about class sizes are in grades 4-12. Specifically, grades K, 5, 7, and 12 class sizes are larger than the ERG and state. The system needs to bring back teaching positions that were not filled last year due to budget reductions.

Howard Friedman presented the 2006/07 budget as it relates to existing programs. Increase in salaries for existing staff is \$645,378, benefits \$324,518, energy \$171,072, outside tuition increased \$224,499, transportation increased \$118,242, supplies \$120,628 which includes technology of \$74,517, program improvements of \$43,357, and other of \$40,000 which includes worker compensation, property insurance, etc.

Dan Keune outlined the increases in the 06/07 budget which are driven by growth. There is an \$867,169 increase for new staff which does not replace everything that was cut from last year. The new staffing includes science teacher, social studies teacher, business, health, and tech education teachers at the HS, social studies, science and remedial math at the Middle School, ½ 4<sup>th</sup> grade teach at CL School to make it a full time position, grade 5 teacher, custodian, security officer, data base technology, ½ special education teacher, English language teacher, special education aides and a change to the athletic director position to include a secretary. The new staffing at the High School is driven by enrollment, class size and graduation requirements.

Mr. Roberson closed the presentation and thanked Bob Pagani and Bob Clements for attending their full day budget workshop.

Mr. Pagani then asked the Board for their questions. Mr. Wachsman asked if there was any redistricting to be done. Mr. Roberson and Dr. Packman stated that the redistricting was done when the Center School addition opened last year. There were no plans to do any more this year. The class sizes for the majority of the primary grades are equivalent; it is in the 4-12 grades where they fall short.

Mr. Joyse asked about the costs of magnet schools and if it could be used to offset some of the new staffing requests. Mr. Roberson stated that the costs of the magnet school are supplemented by the state and that they suspended participation in the magnet program

for one year due to state funding. The transportation costs for these students are very high. There are limited spaces available; about 20 students will be participating next year. Some of these students only go for ½ day. Most parents want their children to remain in Ellington.

Mr. Cleary asked about the entry level salary of \$42,000 in the budget. He was told that this is a 2<sup>nd</sup> step masters and that they use it to be competitive. Mr. Cleary asked about the \$87,000 new technology equipment in the operating budget as opposed to the capital improvements request. Mr. Collins the IT Coordinator stated that the capital improvement item is to replace 330 desk top computers at Windermere, CL and Middle School. The \$87,000 in the operating budget is for printers, laptops and infrastructure for the network. He stated that the state bid prices for the computers are roughly \$800 each.

Mr. Cleary asked if anyone had looked into fuel cells. The Town of South Windsor has one in their High School and has anyone asked what their experience has been. Mr. Littizzio will do some research on this. He also stated that they are looking into getting bid prices for electricity through a coop.

Mr. Joyse asked what our teachers are paid compared to the ERG. Mr. Roberson stated that during arbitration that was looked at by the arbitrator. Mr. Joyse asked that the Board of Education follow up and get this information for the budget hearing as he feels this will probably be a topic of concern.

Mr. Pagani asked if the Board of Education had increased their line item for water to account for the increase. They had not, and Mr. Littizzio will adjust it. Mr. Pagani asked why some salaries on the schedule look like they are going down. Mr. Littizzio told him that it is adjusted for new hires taking over some of the extra classroom time some teachers have had to do to accommodate budget cuts. Pupil Services decreased due to the state taking over some of the testing, and Management Services has increased due to making up for last year's cuts. Aides have increased due to special needs children being in the classrooms.

Mr. Pagani closed the hearing at 9 pm.

Cultural Arts Commission – There is an item for consideration from the Board of Selectmen. They have voted to restore \$5,000 to the Cultural Arts Commission to schedule some summer programs for this year. Some of the Cultural Arts Commission members have quit, and it was discussed as to whether they will come back if they have funds.

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**MOTION (JOYSE) SECONDED (PINTO) AND PASSED TO TABLE THIS ITEM TO MARCH 28 (NEXT WEEK) WHEN THE FIRST SELECTMAN WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Submitted by Lori Smith  
Lori Smith, Clerk